

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 H-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EB-08 PC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

/062 W

-----124251 281156Z /53

R 280830Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1239

INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 3814

E.O. 11652: AGDS 1, 2

TAGS: PINT, PORG, NG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE: RIVER NIGER
COMMISSION

1. DURING HIS AAXUST 25 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE
AMBASSADOR JAMES ASKED ABOUT FUTURE OF RIVER NIGER COMMISSION (RNC). KOUNTCHE SAID THAT FOLLOWING ABIDJO'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE CHAIRMANSHIP, SEKOU TOURE HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT FOR THE COMING YEAR. THE BASIC PROBLEM WITH THE RNC ACCORDING TO KOUNTCHE WAS THAT IT CONTAINED MANY MEMBER STATES WHO HAD NO REAL INTEREST IN NIGER RIVER. KOUNTCHE SAID HE HAD TOLD TOURE THAT DURING THE COMING YEAR HE WOULD PROPOSE BASIC CHANGES IN THE ACT OF NIAMEY (WHICH SET UP THE RNC IN 1963). HE THOUGHT THERE SHOULD BE A REORGANIZED RNC WITH FIVE CORE MEMBERS: GUINEA, MALI, NIGER, NIGERIA AND BENIN. TOURE IS TO CONVOKE THE HEADS OF STATE FOR AN RNC MEETING LATER THIS YEAR, AT WHICH TIME THE NEW ORGANIZATION WILL BE PROPOSED.

2. AMBASSADOR JAMES POINTED OUT THAT AID HAD SOME FUNDS WHICH
COULD BE LOST TO THE RNC IF IT WERE NOT RE-VIVIFIED BEFORE
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SEPTEMBER 30, THE END OF OUR FISCAL YEAR.

3. KOUNTCHE SAID ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH THE RNC WAS THAT
NIGERIA WAS ABLE SIMPLY TO DESIGNATE THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.
THIS KEY INDIVIDUAL WAS NOT ELECTED BY THE MEMBERS AS IN
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (SUCH AS THE OAU), BUT
DESIGNATED BY ONE MEMBER STATE.

4. KOUNTCHE AGREED WITH AMBASSADOR JAMES THAT THE RNC COULD BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT GIVEN THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS WHICH SEVERAL STATES HAD FOR THE RIVER. HE SAID THAT THE STUDIES FOR NIGER'S PROPOSED KANDAJI DAM ARE PROCEEDING WELL AND SHOULD BE FINISHED SOON:

5. COMMENT: KOUNTCHE DID NOT SEEM AT ALL UPSET WHEN THE AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM THAT THE FUNDS FOR THE RNC COULD BE LOST. HE SEEMED TO CONSIDER THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION AS NEARLY DEFUNCT. HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE METHOD OF SELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY COULD BE READ AS A VEILED COMPLAINT AGAINST THE PRESENT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DEHINDE. THE LATTER HAS HAD SERIOUS PERSONAL CLASHES WITH OFFICIALS OF MEMBER STATES AS WELL AS THE LOCAL UNDP RES REP (CHALLONS).JAMES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, AMBASSADORS, MEETINGS, RIVERS, COMMISSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NIAAMEY03814
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780350-1255
Format: TEL
From: NIAAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780817/aaaaaojx.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5716f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1602797
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE: RIVER NIGER COMMISSION
TAGS: PINT, PORG, NG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5716f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014